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ACTION ARA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1978

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 6749

E.O. 12065 GDS 8-17-85 (FREEMAN, AF) OR-P
TAGS SHUM, AR

SUBJECT (U) MINISTER OF INTERIOR BLASTS US STATEMENT ON RIGHTS
GROUPS RAIDS BUT REAFFIRMS ARGENTINA'S IAHCR COMMITMENT

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full
() Classify as _____ () Extend as _____ () Downgrade to _____
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6728, B BUENOS AIRES 6648

1. (U) IN A SPECIALLY CALLED PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE EARLY EVENING OF AUGUST 16, INTERIOR MINISTER ALBANO HARGUINDEGUY, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE GOA, HARSHLY CRITICIZED THE US GOVERNMENT FOR THE STATEMENT MADE THE PREVIOUS DAY BY DEPARMENT SPOKEMAN RESTON CONCERNING THE RECENT RAIDS ON THREE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN BUENOS AIRES.

2. (U) THE OPENING PORTION OF THE STATEMENT HARGUINDEGUY READ TO THE PRESS REAFFIRMED THE INTENTION OF THE GOA TO HONOR ITS COMMITMENT TO THE FORTHCOMING IAHCR MISSION. SAID HARGUINDEGY: "THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT INVITED AND LATER REPEATED ITS INVITATION TO THE IAHCR TO VISIT THE COUNTRY AND FULFILL ITS TASKS WITH TOTAL LIBERTY. IN THAT CONNECTION IT RECEIVED DR. EDMUNDO JARGAS CARRENO, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE IAHCR, TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT. HE WAS INFORMED OF THE DECISION OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO GUARANTEE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE WORK OF THAT HIGH INTERAMERICAN BODY. LET THERE BE NO DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL FULFILL PERFECTLY ITS INTERNATIONAL

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COMMITMENTS WITH ITS USUAL SERIOUSNESS." WITH THIS AFFIRMATION

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OUT OF THE WAY, THE MINISTER WENT INTO HIS ATTACK ON THE RESTON STATEMENT.

3. (U) THE HARGUINDEGUY STATEMENT ENDED WITH THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY:

"A) WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IS SIMPLY A LEGITIMATE AND INESCAPABLE ACTION OF THE ARGENTINE JUDICIARY POWER.

B) THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAS GUARANTEED AND WILL GUARANTEE THE MOST AMPLE FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR THE IAHCR DURING ITS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THIS COUNTRY.

C) MR RESTON TWISTS THE FACTS; HE INTERFERES IN SUBJECTS THAT DO NOT CONCERN HIS COUNTRY; HE SUPINELY OVERLOOKS THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH OUR NATION ASSUMES ITS COMMITMENTS AND, WITH THAT, OVERLOOKS ALSO THE DIGNITY AND PRIDE WHICH HAVE ALWAYS DISTINGUISHED THE ARGENTINA REPUBLIC."

4. (U) IN AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "BLABBERMOUTH DIPLOMACY", THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD AUGUST 17 ALSO TOOK THE US GOVT TO TASK FOR CARRYING ON A COUNTERPRODUCTIVE PUBLIC POLEMIC WITH THE GOA (INSTEAD OF TRADITIONAL SECRET DIPLOMACY) AND FOR URGING THE GOA IMPROPERLY TO INTERFERE WITH THE INDEPENDENT ARGENTINE JUDICIAL SYSTEM. THE HERALD PROFESSED TO SEE POTENTIALLY BENEFICIAL RESULTS FROM THE ARGENTINE JUDICIAL BRANCH'

INTERVENTION IN THE CURRENT CASE. SAID THE HERALD: "THE BEST HOPE OF SOLVING THIS COUNTRY'S AGONIZING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM LIKE IN BRINGING IT ENTIRELY WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF THE LAW. THE JUDGE WHO ORDERED THE RAIDS HAS, WHATEVER HIS ORIGINAL MOTIVES, HELPED CREATE A SITUATION IN WHICH THIS LOOKS MORE LIKELY TO HAPPEN."

5. (U) IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, JUDICIAL SOURCES TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE OFFICES OF THE LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN WERE NEVER CLOSED DOWN BY JUDGE ANZOATEGUI; A POLICE GUARD WAS MERELY POSTED AT THE DOOR FOR SECURITY PURPOSES. MOREOVER, THE UNIDENTIFIED JUDI-

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JUDICIAL SOURCE APPARENTLY ASSERTED THAT MATERIAL CONFISCATED FROM THE LIGA HAD BEEN RETURNED. THE HERALD DISPUTED THIS, REPORTING THAT, ACCORDING TO HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCES, THE DOOR REMAINED SEALED AND THAT CONFISCATED MATERIALS HAD NOT BEEN RETURNED. WHILE THE JUDICIAL "CLARIFICATION" MAY NOT BE ACCURATE, IT SUGGESTS SOME BACKPEDALLING ON THE PART OF THE JUDGE'S OFFICE.

5. (U) AT 6:30 PM AUGUST 16, THE FOREIGN OFFICE CALLED AMBASSADOR A SECOND TIME TO INFORM HIM THAT THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR

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WAS ABOUT TO HAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE, IN WHICH HE WOULD GIVE THE GOA VIEWS OF THE RESTON STATEMENT, AND AGAIN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GOOD RELATIONS ESTABLISHED IN QUITO WOULD NOT BE UNDERMINED. THE FONOFF OFFICIAL ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE GOA STATEMENT WAS BEING MADE BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, NOT FOREIGN RELATIONS --IMPLYING IT WAS PRIMARILY TO COVER THE GOA'S INTERNAL FLANKS.

7. (U) AUGUST 17 IS A NATIONAL HOLIDAY AND ALL SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICER ARE ATTENDING CEREMONIES AROUND THE COUNTRY HONORING SAN MARTIN. AMBASSADOR EXPECTS TO SEE GEN. VIOLA AUGUST 20.
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